

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed December 18, 2009. Claims 1, 2, 11-12, and 17 are amended above. Claims 3-4, 8-10, and 14-15 were previously withdrawn by way of an election made in response to a restriction requirement. Claims 1-2, 5-7, 11-13, and 16-17 are currently being examined on the merits. Applicant respectfully submits that no new matter has been added by way of the amendments made herein. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application, and favorable action on all remaining claims, in view of these amendments and the following remarks.

Claim 1 is amended to recite, in a pneumatic support, the following:

- (a) a gas-tight elongated hollow body of a flexible material adapted to be pressurized with compressed gas;
- (b) at least one compression element which, responsive to application of a transverse operational load, is axially compressed;
- (c) at least one tension element which, responsive to application of the transverse operational load, is axially tensioned;
- (d) wherein the hollow body has a tapered shape toward both ends of the hollow body;
- (e) wherein the at least one compression element and the at least one tension element are connected to one another at a common node located at respective ends of the hollow body;
- (f) wherein, when the hollow body is inflated, the at least one compression element and the at least one tension element lie on a generator line of the hollow body; and
- (g) wherein, relative to the application of the transverse operational load, the at least one compression element lies on a near side of the hollow body and the at least one tension element lies on a far side of the hollow body.

For ease of discussion, the features of claim 1 will be referred to herein by the reference characters noted above. Applicant respectfully submits that features (a)-(g) are supported throughout the specification and figures. More specifically, features (a)-(g) are supported by at least paragraph 20 of the specification. Regarding feature (f) of amended claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that a “generator line” is defined as “a geometric element that generates a geometric figure, especially a straight line that generates a surface by moving in a specified

fashion.”¹ Applicant respectfully submits that it is disclosed in at least the figures that the at least one compression element and the at least one tension element are disposed upon a line that, when rotated, produces the shape of the hollow body. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that feature (f) of amended claim 1 is adequately supported by the original disclosure.

Claims 1-2, 5-6, and 16-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) as being anticipated by Japanese Patent Application Publication No. 7-173898 (“Japan ‘898”). Applicant respectfully traverses these claim rejections. Applicant has obtained an English translation of Japan ‘898 attached hereto as Exhibit A.

Feature (b) of amended claim 1 recites, at least one compression element which, responsive to application of a transverse operational load, is axially compressed. Applicant respectfully submits that Japan ‘898 fails to disclose this claim feature. In contrast, Japan ‘898 discloses an air cushion (11) which is surrounded by a wire (11c).² Since a wire, by definition, is incapable of supporting a compression load, Applicant respectfully submits that Japan ‘898 fails to disclose at least feature (b) of amended claim 1. For at least this reason, Applicant respectfully submits that amended claim 1 is not anticipated by Japan ‘898 and is in condition for allowance.

Claims 2, 5-6, and 16-17 depend from, and further restrict, independent claim 1 in a patentable sense. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that, for at least those reasons set forth above with respect to independent claim 1, dependent claims 2, 5-6, and 16-17 are also not anticipated by Japan ‘898 and are in condition for allowance.

Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japan ‘898. Applicant respectfully traverses this claim rejection. Claim 7 depends from, and further restricts, independent claim 1 in a patentable sense. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that, for at least those reasons set forth above with respect to independent claim 1, dependent claim 7 distinguishes over Japan ‘898.

¹ The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 4th Ed.

² Exhibit A, p. 4, ¶ 10.

Claim 11 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japan ‘898 in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,830,519 to Lewis (“Lewis”). Applicant respectfully traverses this claim rejection. Claim 11 depends from, and further restricts, independent claim 1 in a patentable sense. Applicant respectfully submits that the addition of Lewis fails to cure the deficiencies of Japan ‘898 as applied to independent claim 1. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that, for at least those reasons set forth above with respect to independent claim 1, dependent claim 11 distinguishes over the combination of Japan ‘898 and Lewis.

Claims 12-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japan ‘898 in view of Lewis, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,300,910 to Isaac (“Isaac”). Applicant respectfully traverses these claim rejections. Claims 12-13 depend from, and further restrict, independent claim 1 in a patentable sense. Applicant respectfully submits that the addition of Lewis and Isaac fails to cure the deficiencies of Japan ‘898 as applied to independent claim 1. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that, for at least those reasons set forth above with respect to independent claim 1, dependent claims 12-13 distinguish over the combination of Japan ‘898, Lewis, and Isaac.

In view of the above amendment, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. A Notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

Electronic signature: /Shoaib A. Mithani/
Shoaib A. Mithani
Registration No.: 61,654
WINSTEAD PC
P.O. Box 50784
Dallas, Texas 75201
(214) 745-5400
Attorneys For Applicant